

dollars directly to pay for lobbying and it goes on and on and on. Now the thing that is so nice about this bill is it is a direct, up front bill. It just says, we acknowledge, we acknowledge that the senior citizens in this state do have interests which are unique to senior citizens and we acknowledge that we ought to be able to hear from senior citizens in an organized collective fashion and we acknowledge that to assist our hearing from those senior citizens in an organized collective fashion we are going to have to provide some tax support for that and so we acknowledge. We are prepared to provide \$10,000 a year to hear an organized voice from senior citizens through their Silver-haired Legislature function and I am going to guarantee you, I am going to guarantee you that that \$10,000 a year is a lot cheaper, a lot cheaper than the kind of dollars that taxes are now being used for, that taxes are now being used for, to influence legislation in this state. And in my opinion it is such a small price for us to pay for such an important service and the service is our hearing from older people who are affected by legislation, their views on legislation and one of the things that you and I hold public hearings for, one of the things that you and I have receptive ears to, one of the things that you and I have willing eyes for, are points of view from our citizenry at large and if we have to pay a small amount of money to get those points of view, then we should pay that small amount of money to get those points of view. And that is why our funding the Silver-haired Legislature is an important activity and that is why it would be a mistake to kill the bill.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Silver-haired Higgins, please.

SENATOR HIGGINS: I don't know whether to say, thank you, Mr. Speaker, or not. In 1981 I was a freshman Senator as you all recall and I so facetiously, I guess, that is the only excuse I can use now because I can't believe I was serious, when I introduced a bill that said, taxpayers will no longer give money to the Chambers of Commerce across the state because the Chambers of Commerce come and lobby this Legislature for big business or little business and oftentimes they lobby for things that the people in their own cities and counties don't even want. I can't tell you how fast they killed that bill in committee and I can't tell